

**Stefanie Dipper (University of Potsdam):
German Quantifiers: Determiners or Adjectives? (Abstract)**

In this abstract, I want to discuss the categorial status of certain quantifying expressions in German, such as *mehrere* ‘several’, *irgendwelche* ‘some’, *vielen* ‘many’. In traditional grammars (e.g. Helbig and Buscha (1993)), a subset of these expressions is classified as “Artikelwörter” (‘article words’), while the complementary subset is called “indefinite Zahladjektive” (‘indefinite number adjectives’). In linguistic analyses, a similar dichotomy can be found. Here, the classes of determiners (henceforth: Dquants) vs. adjectival quantifiers (henceforth: Aquants) are usually distinguished by criteria such as: determiners precede adjectives (position); adjectives can be iterated (recursion); adjectives can be modified by adverbs (modification).

According to these criteria, quantifiers like *vielen* ‘many’ qualify as Aquants, cf. (1), whereas *mehrere* ‘several’ comes out as a Dquant, cf. (2). Moreover, the criteria imply that there are ambiguous quantifying expressions in German. For instance, *beide* ‘both’ can behave both like a Dquant and Aquant, depending on the context (absence vs. presence of the definite article), cf. (3).

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| (1) a. <i>die vielen Leute</i> ‘the many people’ | b. <i>sehr vielen Leute</i> ‘very many people’ |
| (2) a. <i>*die mehreren Leute</i> ‘the several people’ | b. <i>*sehr mehrere Leute</i> ‘very several people’ |
| (3) a. <i>die beiden Leute</i> ‘the both nice people’ | b. <i>beide netten Leute</i> ‘both nice people’ |

Note that it is not really clear whether the criteria are only intended as sufficient conditions of an adjectival status (and, hence, would not help to classify *mehrere* ‘several’ in (2)) or whether they represent necessary conditions as well. However, the criteria are questionable in any case: they may well be connected to semantic properties of the respective quantifiers and need not be related to the syntactic, categorial status at all. We therefore propose an alternative criterion to classify Dquants and Aquants: inflectional behaviour of (ordinary) adjectives that cooccur with the quantifier in question.

Attributive adjectives come in two shapes in German: there are strong and weak adjectives, depending on the presence and declension type of preceding determiners, cf. (4).

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| (4) a. <i>nette[+st] Leute</i> ‘nice people’: | no determiner + strong adjective |
| b. <i>allerlei[-] nette[+st] Leute</i> ‘various nice people’: | uninflected det + strong adjective |
| c. <i>die[+st] netten[-st] Leute</i> ‘the nice people’: | inflected (strong) det + weak adjective |

The (somewhat simplified) generalization is: In a DP, [+st] (indicating strong declension) is represented (i) on D, if present and inflected; (ii) on attributive adjectives otherwise (cf. Bhatt (1990); Olsen (1991); Netter (1994); for different analyses, see, e.g., Müller (1999); Pollard and Sag (1994)). In other words: determiners and adjectives show complementary declension.

Applying this criterion to our quantifiers reveals that there are indeed determiner-like and adjective-like quantifiers. However, their distribution is different from that of the pattern above (compare (5) and (6) with (1) and (2), respectively). Both *vielen* ‘many’ and *mehrere* ‘several’ now come out as Aquants (since they are inflected in the same way as the ordinary adjective that follows them). An example of a quantifier that is classified as a Dquant by our criterion is *alle* ‘all’, cf. (7). Our criterion also confirms the existence of multiple determiners in German, cf. (8).¹

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| (5) <i>vielen[+st] nette[+st] Leute</i> ‘many nice people’ |
| (6) <i>mehrere[+st] nette[+st] Leute</i> ‘several nice people’ |
| (7) <i>alle[+st] netten[-st] Leute</i> ‘all nice people’ |
| (8) a. <i>alle[+st] die[+st] netten[-st] Leute</i> ‘all the nice people’ |
| b. <i>alle[+st] diese[+st] netten[-st] Leute</i> ‘all these nice people’ |
| c. <i>manch[-] einer[+st] netten[-st] Frau</i> ‘some (a) nice woman’ |

We are now in the position to account for another phenomenon in German, which, to our knowledge, has not received any explanation or formal analysis up to now: After certain quantifiers, adjectives show varying declension within the same context, cf. (9).

¹Example (7a) shows that the first of the criteria mentioned above — recursion — cannot even be a sufficient condition of Aquants.

- (9) a. *mancher*[+st] *netten*[-st] *Leute* ‘some nice people’
 b. *mancher*[+st] *netter*[+st] *Leute* ‘some nice people’

In our analysis, this data can easily be captured by assuming that *mancher* is a Dquant in (9a) and an Aquant in (9b). We now sketch out our analysis of these facts. Declension type is represented by a feature DECL.² Strong determiners (including Dquants) and strong adjectives (including Aquants) introduce complementary values of this feature., cf. the lexical entries of *alle* ‘all’, *viele* ‘many’, and *nette* ‘nice’ in (10).

- (10) a. *alle* D (↑PRED) = *alle* (↑DECL) = strong-det
 b. *viele* A (↑PRED) = *viele* (↑DECL) = strong-adj
 c. *nette* A (↑PRED) = *nett* (↑DECL) = strong-adj

(10) also shows that we assume that all quantifying expressions introduce a PRED value, regardless of their categorial status.³ Similar to the agreement features CASE and NUM, all DECL features within a DP are unified via suitable equations in the DP and NP rules. This prohibits co-occurrence of strong determiners and strong adjectives.

Weak adjectives (including Aquants) specify the constraining equation (↑INFL) = c strong-det. Therefore, they can only occur with a strong determiner (which provides the required feature, as in (1a) or (4c)), cf. (11).

- (11) a. *vielen* A (↑PRED) = *viele* (↑DECL) = c strong-det
 b. *netten* A (↑PRED) = *nett* (↑DECL) = c strong-det

Uninflected determiners do not put any constraint on DECL, cf. (12). Hence, only strong adjectives may follow such determiners (as in (4b)).

- (12) *allerlei* D (↑PRED) = *allerlei*

Our analysis also captures the existence of multiple determiners: the values of the DECL feature simply unify. To explain the existence of ambiguous quantifiers (such as *beide* ‘both’ or *mancher* ‘some’), we assume that these expressions are assigned either category, D or A, in their lexicon entries, cf. (13).

- (13) *mancher* D (↑PRED) = *manche* (↑DECL) = strong-det
 A (↑PRED) = *manche* (↑DECL) = strong-adj

To conclude this outline, let us speculate about the reasons of the existence of ambiguous quantifiers: due to their special semantics, quantificational adjectives always occur at the left periphery of all adjectives within a DP. Hence, it seems plausible that such expressions might be reanalyzed as determiners.

References

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²In contrast to Scandinavian languages, strong declension does not correlate with definiteness. Hence, we make use of an abstract feature DECL rather than a “semantic” feature DEF, as proposed by Börjars (1998) or Börjars *et al.* (1999) for Scandinavian languages.

³The exact form of the PRED value is not relevant to our purpose, since we do not intend to make any statements about the semantic contribution of the quantifiers. We only want to emphasize that the categorial differences between the quantifiers is not necessarily mirrored by semantic differences.